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ABSTRACT

Designed for teachers and others involved in the development of early childhood education programs, the resource guide presents a model for teaching children, ages four through seven. Part 1 presents a brief overview of the growth and background of early childhood education in Maryland. Part 2 traces the origins and development of kindergarten education, with attention given to leading pioneers and legislative mandates. Part 3 discusses the pioneering of prekindergarten in Maryland. Part 4 deals with the goals of early childhood education, and part 5 categorizes the characteristics and needs of young children by age. Part 6, the bulk of the document, gives the details of program implementation. Topics include: kindergarten, the classroom environment, learning centers, room arrangement, scheduling, curriculum, language development, and instructional approaches to reading, literature, handwriting, spelling, mathematics, the social sciences, and the world of work. The final section emphasizes the importance of teamwork by teachers, parents, nurses, aides, volunteers, and others associated with the program. Also provided are a classroom map, sample schedules, and a bibliography of over 80 books written between 1964 and 1979. (LH)

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Education In Maryland

A Resource Guide — Teaching Children Ages 4, 5, 6, and 7

PS 013628

Early Childhood Education Branch
Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs
Maryland State Department of Education

June 1983

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BACKGROUND AND GROWTH OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

No attempt to describe the growth of early childhood education in Maryland is complete without acknowledging the factors that contributed to its inception. An intermeshing of the social, economic and political forces surrounded early childhood development in Europe, its acceptance in America, and its eventual incorporation as a significant part of the public educational system in the State of Maryland.

In Maryland's early history, education was regarded entirely as a private matter and no reference to a public system was made. In 1723 the legislature authorized a school to be erected in each county, but it was not mandatory, nor were any funds provided.

Few substantive laws dealing with education were passed until 1865 when a strong centralized system was established by law. It set up a uniform, statewide system of free public schools under the guidance of a State Board of Education. However, in 1868 the legislation was completely modified, abolishing the State Board and superintendent. County and district school systems became supreme.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction L. Van Bokkelen issued the first Annual Report for the school year ending June 30, 1866. He reported that children of five were permitted to attend public schools.

Generally, interest in the status of children's rights and their development is coupled with periods of social revolution and reform. These periods appear to cycle, rising and falling with changes in sociological phenomena. They are also linked to changes in social thought about man's freedom and humanitarian principles of living.

The influences of these changing attitudes have been remarkable in their impact. From infanticide practiced in the Middle Ages to the notion that young children were small adults, one recognizes that the changing philosophic attitudes and behavior toward young children have been mammoth.

KINDERGARTEN MILESTONES

Frederick Froebel's contribution to the kindergarten movement gained widespread acceptance from educators and philanthropists alike outside his native Germany. The government there labeled kindergartens to be unaesthetic and banned them. His dampened spirits were livened when converts spread his ideas to other cities in Europe and to America. Froebel was of the opinion that the movement towards industrialization was conducive to acceptance of kindergarten: parents were leaving the home for the workplace and a means for the care of young children was needed.

The same political climate that prohibited the development of Froebel's kindergarten in Germany was also responsible for the emigration of many Germans to America. Among those fleeing the Revolution of 1848 were Carl and Margaretha Schurz, who are credited with opening the first kindergarten in America in 1855. Their kindergarten was private, German speaking, and established so that "their three-year-old daughter might benefit from the education in which her parents had such faith." Mrs. Schurz, a student of Froebel, is credited, though indirectly, with introducing the Froebelian kindergarten concept to American public schools.

The period from 1870 to 1910 saw a broad and increasing awareness of the importance of education in America. Both Europe and the United States experienced a growing interest in children's development and psychology.

In the 1830's, Horace Mann stressed the importance of education for the growing child, the "great equalizer" of men.

Another leading advocate of the study of children during the period was Stanley Hall, who initiated the child study movement. In 1893, the creation of the National Association for the Study of Children gave added force to the child study movement.

Impressed by an exhibition of Froebelian materials and the kindergarten concept, Henry Barnard expressed his impressions in a report to the Governor of Connecticut which was published in the ***American Journal of Education.*** Barnard's article introduced kindergarten into American educational literature. His influence as Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Education and later as United States Commissioner of Education helped disburse educational philosophy in American circles. Barnard was instrumental in assembling a volume of kindergarten literature in the English language which was published under the title ***Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers.*** Barnard amplified his thoughts toward kindergarten in a report submitted to the United States Senate in 1868. His work on behalf of kindergartens in America earned him the title "Father of the American Kindergarten Movement."

The efforts on behalf of the public kindergarten movement in the United States were also formalized through the actions of Dr. William T. Harris, Superintendent of Schools, St. Louis, Missouri, who is credited with establishing in 1873 the first kindergarten in the United States.

Harris' position as Superintendent of Schools, St. Louis, Missouri, and later as United States Commissioner of Education helped him in spreading the message of the value of kindergarten. He believed the kindergarten period, for children from age three to seven years, was the ideal time and Froebelian gifts and occupations were the ideal materials for industrial training. Further, he was not of the opinion that principles and procedures of kindergarten be extended into the primary system. To him, kindergarten was excellent for children in transitional stages between the home and the school. In his opinion it was not the purpose of the kindergarten to prolong childhood.

Another Froebelian devotee was Susan Blow, who was influenced by the kindergarten movement when she traveled through Europe in 1871. Her name is linked with those of Elizabeth Peabody, Horace Mann and William T. Harris in bringing the kindergarten movement to America and in its incorporation into the budding public school system.

Supporting the efforts of these pioneers were a number of societal factors. The Puritan philosophy for public schools pervaded the colonial educational system. Philanthropists helped. Frustration with legislative actions to incorporate kindergartens into public school systems so that poor children might receive the benefits derived from early educational experiences caused groups of people to band together to support charity kindergartens. Reformers, steeped in environmental optimism, sought to change the urban slum pattern by placing three to seven-year-olds in a kindergarten for three hours a day and by establishing a working relationship with the parents of those children.

The rising immigrant population, the development of slums, and the rising birth rate offered a broad stage on which philanthropists might perform. Kindergartens developed rapidly in the public school systems in cities like Indianapolis, St. Louis, Boston, and Chicago—all following the same action as in Massachusetts. While Maryland is not mentioned in most historical accounts, the progress of the kindergarten movement in Maryland is significantly similar. Here, the history of kindergarten is largely its history in Baltimore.

The first public kindergarten in Maryland did in fact follow the Massachusetts pattern in that it was founded in an industrial, urban area: in Sparrows Point in 1888 under the auspices of the steel company there.

The First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1868 reported Dr. Blair's impassioned plea for kindergartens as well as a request by Dr. Alexander Chapin. Dr. Chapin argued that children were dropping out of school, one-half of the child population by age 11 and one-third by age 10. To combat this condition, Chapin strongly recommended that the State should reach down lower, as to age, for pupils and invite the kindergarten into the public school system.

Baltimore's first public kindergarten opened in 1901. Two dozen more opened their doors over the next 20 years.

By 1920 supervision was introduced and a teacher of kindergarten theory was added to the faculty of the Teacher's Training School. In addition, a kindergarten practice center was opened. As a result the number of public kindergartens in Maryland and the perceived value of kindergarten education increased.

Following the efforts of early philanthropists as well as educational reformers and public support, the Maryland General Assembly began to move. An overview of its actions on behalf of the kindergarten movement follows.

In 1920, $2,000 was appropriated for the establishment of ten new kindergartens; ten more were opened each of the two following years.

In 1923 the Board of School Commissioners increased the budget to allow existing kindergartens to purchase more equipment.

In 1925 kindergarten was established in Montgomery County as a cooperative effort between the Board of Education and a parent group.

By 1926 a proposed bylaw (52) was approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, permitting county boards of education "to establish kindergartens taught by properly qualified kindergarten teachers, provided that sufficient funds are specifically appropriated in the annual school budget for this purpose."

The bylaw was revised in 1927 to establish educational requirements for kindergarten teachers. These requirements were further strengthened by increasing the program of study from a two-year kindergarten-primary course to a three-year course. By February 1927 there were 76 kindergartens with more than 3,000 pupils.

The 69th Annual Report of the State Board of Education Showing Condition of the Public Schools of Maryland for the year ending July 31, 1935 shows kindergarten enrollment at 5,325. Baltimore City accounted for 3,861 of that total. Montgomery County had 375 children enrolled in kindergarten and Baltimore County had 44.

In 1939 Bylaw 54 was enacted for the express purpose of including nursery schools and raising the required course of study for teachers to four years.

The 81st Annual Report of Maryland State Department of Education (1947) recommended that the Legislative Council consider the advisability of providing some state aid toward the establishment of kindergartens whenever "they can operate easily and economically."

Washington County opened its first public kindergarten in 1947. The program served 104 children in four classes taught by three teachers. Worcester County followed with two kindergartens in 1954. In 1959 Caroline County began a program for 68 students and employed three teachers. Other counties made certain limited provisions by providing space for kindergarten or financial support for salaries and/or equipment. By law, Prince George's County provided a kindergarten supervisor for the cooperative kindergartens but did not provide funds. By 1952 the total kindergarten enrollment in the State had grown to 13,954 students. It had grown to 21,553 by 1958. In that year a State Board bylaw authorized county boards of education and the Board of School Commissioners of Baltimore City, at their discretion, to establish kindergartens and nursery schools "subject to such regulations as such boards may formulate, with the approval of the State Board of Education. . ." Also that year the state body authorized Prince George's County to appoint a kindergarten director.

The education of five-year-olds was addressed in the April 1967 issue of the Maryland School Bulletin, Vol. VIII #2 in a series entitled "The Importance of Early Childhood Education." The series emphasized the characteristics of a good early education program and the importance of parental involvement in early childhood education programs.

In 1967, for the first time, Maryland authorized state aid for public kindergartens. The move was heralded as a means to provide kindergarten education to eligible students residing in all counties, in particular those ten counties currently not offering the program, according to then State School Superintendent James A. Sensenbaugh.

The January 1, 1968 edition of the Report of the School Law Revision Commission reported that "another milestone in the American dream was reached in 1967 when the General Assembly enacted legislation incorporating kindergarten in the basic foundation program of education. Although not yet fully implemented, the Maryland public school system now consists of grades kindergarten through twelve." (p.18) The act stipulated that all local school systems must provide kindergarten classes for all five-year-olds wishing to attend, starting in 1970. It was expected to meet the needs of approximately 19,000 children in the counties with partial programs or no programs at all, said then Attorney General Francis B. Burch. At the time the bill was passed, Baltimore County had 4,370 children enrolled in kindergarten with 5,149 eligible. Anne Arundel County had 1,935 pupils enrolled.

Of the twenty-four school systems in the State, nine had no kindergarten program. Kent and Somerset counties had plans to establish partial programs in the coming year. The problem in mandating kindergarten programs on a statewide basis was not a matter of failing to convince educators, said Dr. Sensenbaugh, but a question of working out the finances.
(Evening Sun, 8/24/67)

As a result of this legislation, kindergarten programs were established in 1968 in Garrett, Harford, Howard, Queen Anne's and Wicomico counties. In the following year, Dorchester, Kent, and Somerset counties added kindergarten programs bringing the total kindergarten enrollment in the State to 58,437. Compulsory public kindergarten in the State of Maryland was to be in effect for all children age five by September 1973, with the exception of Allegany and Carroll counties who had a deadline of September 1970 for full implementation.

Now in the 1980s the general public, as well as educators, realize the significance of the role of early education in the total development of children.

It is recognized that the early years are critical, not only in building a foundation for cognitive development, but also for socio-emotional growth and future success.

In order to insure that these benefits are extended to all students, well formulated early childhood education programs are essential. The State of Maryland has made diligent progress in the direction of programs to accomplish this end.

PIONEERING PREKINDERGARTEN

The years before six are those in which a child grows and develops most rapidly. Recent research has indicated that many characteristics which are conducive to success in school and later life are shaped at any early age.

It was J. McVicker Hunt (1961) who exploded the myth of the fixed IQ and presented extensive evidence that the environment is an important determinant in the development of intelligence. Fowler's studies (1962) proposed that patterns of learning and attitudes that determine school success are formed during the early childhood years. In 1964 Bloom's review of longitudinal data on human development led him to conclude that intelligence develops most rapidly during the first four to six years of life, and that the greatest change in such a characteristic can be effected during the period of its most rapid growth.

Voluminous research has been conducted on the benefits of prekindergarten experiences on children. However, after many years of research, several important generalizations can be made:

- Prekindergarten programs have had significant and measurable effects on student IQ and/or achievement as measured by standardized tests.
- Test scores of disadvantaged children improve with kindergarten experience.
- Longitudinal studies indicate lasting effects through the third grade.
- Children who have had prekindergarten experiences are significantly less likely to require special education or to be retained in grade.

Over the past decade the number of early childhood education programs in Maryland and throughout the nation has greatly increased, each varying in its emphasis on cognitive skills and social development. The result has been a wide variety of approaches, each claiming to offer participants the greatest benefits.

In response to the growing need and demand for public programs to serve children under the age of five, educators have asked which approach or approaches will work best for a given group of children.

The upsurge in the 1960s of federal activity and funding for early childhood education programs, combined with strong leadership at the state level and increased local interest, stimulated local school systems in Maryland to develop new programs for children below the age of six and to refine and expand existing ones. Since its formation in 1965, the Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs has been responsible for two federal programs that have served as vehicles for the development of early childhood education projects in local school systems: Title I and Title III (later Title IV-C of the Education Amendments of 1974) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The primary emphasis of ESEA Title I projects in Maryland has been basic skills mastery. This concentration reflects the conviction that early intervention, coupled with a strong program in basic skills, is a key to any effort to compensate for the educational disadvantage associated with poverty. ESEA Title III funds and, subsequently, Title IV-C funds have made possible the development of a number of exemplary early childhood education programs across the State.

The State Board of Education assigned a high priority to early childhood education in 1972 further encouraging the concentration of Title I and Title III funds on programs for children in prekindergarten through the third grade.

Maryland educators recognize the benefits of early childhood education for all children, but practical considerations imposed by limited resources have led to emphasis at the federal and state level on prekindergarten programs first to those children with the greatest needs and then to all children.

Prekindergarten programs in Maryland, regardless of the source of their funding, reflect the particular philosophy of the local school system and the needs of the community being served. However, all programs of early childhood education have had in common these key characteristics:

- Development of cognitive skills via an organized sequential curriculum, with an emphasis on language development.
- Preservice and inservice staff training.
- A diagnostic approach to the education of each child.
- Use of individualized and small group instruction.
- Attention to self-concept as an important part of each child's development.
- Parent participation in program planning and operation.
- Referral to appropriate supportive services in the areas of nutrition, social work, and health.
- Continuing program evaluation in terms of individual and overall achievement.

State and local programs continue as they have in the past to benefit from federally funded projects such as those described here. Curriculum and teaching strategies developed under ESEA projects are frequently adapted to other programs. These projects have afforded educators an opportunity to discover what is effective, or of equal importance, and what is ineffective in enhancing the environments of children whose

early development has not been adequately stimulated. Project evaluations offer data upon which to base policy decisions for children with a variety of needs and from differing socio-economic backgrounds.

It is important to stress that because a project has been designed to meet the needs of economically or environmentally disadvantaged children, or children who are at high risk to develop learning difficulties, in no way diminishes its relevance for the broader population of young children. To the contrary, every young child enrolled in a prekindergarten or kindergarten class during the next decade will be a beneficiary of these pioneering experiences in early childhood education in Maryland.

THE GOALS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN MARYLAND

An effective program of early childhood education seeks to strengthen all aspects of the child's development. The goals are to enable children to:

1. Acquire a foundation for learning and become interested in many kinds of things, in the beauty and excitement of the world about and within themselves;
2. Develop a positive feeling about themselves and about their own abilities to create and learn;
3. Develop the skills and processes necessary for learning and communicating about their world;
4. Participate in activities that increase their physical and mental health and develop positive habits of personal care;
5. Understand their strengths and limitations as individuals; to cope with success and failure;
6. Acquire information and develop concepts in a variety of content areas: language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, art, music, physical education, health, and safety;
7. Meet and work with persons of different sexes, races, ages, and cultural and economic backgrounds, so as:
   -to observe similarities and differences among people
   -to appreciate and learn from the unique abilities of other persons
   -to become sensitive to the needs and feelings of others
   -to cope with positive and negative feelings directed toward them
   -to work dependently, independently, or interdependently as the situation requires.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Intellectual development for young children begins, not with the abstract, but with the concrete: things they can feel, touch, smell, taste, and hear. Learning must be related to their own experiences, their world, and to that which has the most meaning for them. It must be rewarding and challenging.

Intellectual development in young children has been the focus of much research, thought, and discussion. Significant work done by Piaget, Montessori, Bloom, and others on this multi-dimensional process has helped to set a framework for designing programs that stimulate learning for young children.

Erik Erikson has described vitally important developmental tasks of the preschool years. His studies indicate that a developmentally appropriate atmosphere for learning is one that supports and enhances the development of trust, autonomy, initiative, and imagination. The studies of Frances Ilg and Louise Ames suggest that the child's development is characterized by behavior cycles. While each child's timing is different, all may be observed to go through periods of equilibrium and disequilibrium in which they are, in turn, outgoing and aggressive and withdrawn. Such periods are sources of some constraints and some special opportunities in the young child's learning.

Piaget's research describes the young child's thinking as egocentric and dominated by the perceptual experiences of the moment. The child's concepts, at first embedded in concrete experience, become more and more abstract as they have more experiences in grouping objects, dealing with time, space and numbers, and experimenting with processes. The symbols of language assist the child in expressing experiences with abstraction. They develop language skills as they interact with people. Language facility helps the child to solve problems, to plan and to direct his or her own activities. It is through social interaction that the child learns the concepts with which the culture organizes experience.

The child is equipped at birth with the basic machinery for learning, but through experiences learns how to learn. Early childhood education programs should be designed to satisfy their needs, stimulate their interests, and exercise all learning modes.

DEVELOPMENT

	The Children	The Program
THE SENSES	The children gather information about their world through smelling, tasting, looking, listening, touching.	Should provide a variety of experiences that allow the children to broaden their world through all the senses.
THE MUSCLES	Young children seem to be perpetual motion machines. It is through movement that they discover what their bodies can do and how they can gain mastery over them.	Should recognize the children's need to use their muscles and provide many opportunities to develop and improve motor ability.
CURIOSITY	This seems to be the child's internal drive to learn.	Should provide experiences that encourage the child to explore, examine, take apart, put together, ask questions.
LANGUAGE	Children are born into a world geared to verbal communication.	Should encourage the children to discover, name, describe, ask questions and to share with others their experiences, their feelings, their thoughts.
ORGANIZING ABILITY	Children develop the ability to organize experience into patterns that can be used over and over again in daily life.	Should recognize that these patterns change as the child grows. The children should be rewarded as they unlearn their old babyish behavior and learn more mature behavior.

(Adapted from Murphy and Leeper, 1973)

NEEDS

TO TRUST THE WORLD:	Children need to develop a sense of trust before learning can take place effectively.
TO KNOW HIS/HER OWN BODY:	Children need to discover their own bodies and sense its relationship to distance, height and other characteristics of space.
FAMILIAR OBJECTS:	Children need a variety of experiences to make them familiar with objects around them.
PEOPLE:	Children need to develop a growing awareness of their relationship to people around them.
TO UNDERSTAND TIME:	Children need experiences which will help them discover the meaning of time.
REALISTIC FEAR:	Children need to learn to recognize real danger.
TO HANDLE ANGER:	Anger is natural and needs to be controlled and directed.
TO COPE WITH FRUSTRATION:	Children who learn to do many interesting things and do not need just one activity to make them happy are ones who have begun to cope with frustration.
TO DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY:	Children's sense of self develops as they feel increasingly capable. They need to feel needed.

MODES OF LEARNING

EXPLORATION:	Children learn through all the sensory modes.	Learning programs encourage exploration by providing a wealth of learning materials and opportunities to experiment and discover indoors and out.
TRIAL AND ERROR:	Children learn by doing, by profiting from mistakes.	Learning programs encourage this with puzzles and other manipulative materials.
PAIN:	There is a natural desire to avoid pain. Children may learn positive or negative things through painful experiences.	Physical punishment may teach the children to hate the person administering the punishment rather than teaching them not to do whatever it is that they were punished for.
PLEASURE:	When learning is fun, the children want to keep on learning.	Learning programs provide activities that are fun and satisfying. Teacher's smiles, conversations, praise of work well done all contribute to the general feeling of self-satisfaction that comes from being recognized.
IMITATION:	Children learn by observing and imitating, by copying grown-ups and other children.	Learning programs encourage this through the development of warm relations— child/teacher and child/child. Teachers model language, manners, values, etc.
PARTICIPATION:	Children join in the action.	Learning is stimulated by the supportive group.
COMMUNICATION:	Words are links to the environment. They give us a means of sorting out the information we receive.	Learning programs provide opportunities to develop words and to identify, classify, and compare objects. Children are encouraged to describe, discuss, ask questions, answer questions, name objects, tell feelings, thoughts, wishes.

(Adapted from Murphy and Leeper, 1973)

CHILDREN, AGES 4, 5, 6, and 7

Characteristics and Needs

Children have individual differences, but there are common characteristics shared by children everywhere.

Growing Up Is Important to Young Children

Children want to grow up. They are affectionate. They respond to family love. They may, at times, seem to have no concern for others. They may play alone, completely absorbed in "my own little world," but just as readily and eagerly they may bounce back to one or more peers for equally vigorous involvement. They have deep feelings, but these feelings can be close to the surface in stressful situations.

Individual Differences

It is doubtful that there are two children exactly alike except in chronological age and body weight anywhere in the entire world. A child's make-up is so complex that it would be dangerous for any person to assume that a child of one sex and age could share similar learning opportunities and emerge with similar achievements or behaviors to other children.

From the time of conception, inherent genetic characteristics cannot be altered, but from that time on what a person is destined to become, aside from those genetically inherited characteristics, is determined by those upon whom the individual is dependent. Environmental influences affect physical and behavioral changes in human beings from immediately after conception until the time they cease to exist as living beings. During those earliest periods of development, parents are the most responsible for the conditioning of behavior and the physical development of their as yet unborn offspring.

Children have their own unique strengths and weaknesses, needs and characteristics. They are individuals in a social milieu where they must learn to cope with their peers in a mass society, while at the same time retaining their individuality, developing a positive concept of self, and attempting to fulfill their own aspirations relevant to their place in this world.

Characteristics and Needs (Ages 4-7)

About Fours

Physical Development

- Tires easily and still needs an afternoon nap
- Runs, does not walk
- Small muscles lag behind the large ones in development and coordination
- Talks, talks, talks
- Can dress self if given plenty of time, but still has trouble with shoes
- Can run and jump with real dexterity and daring
- Is willing to try new food
- Can count four or more objects and touch them at the same time
- Can chat during meals and eat at the same time
- Can run short errands if directions are simple

Characteristic Behavior

- Is exuberant, enthusiastic and sometimes exasperating
- Wants far more independence than can really handle
- Is beginning to venture out for friends and adventure
- Is interested in adults and all of their activities
- Is fascinated by words—the sound of them and their effect upon others
- Experiments with "naughty" words as well as poetry
- "Shows off"—is bossy
- Tests immediate environment to determine extent of control
- Begins to know about self as a separate person apart from family
- Loves loud noises, especially to make them, but becomes frightened of sirens, bells, and whistles that are unexpected
- Begins to understand "yesterday," "today," and "tomorrow" but other designations of time are still vague
- About 4-1/2 is starting to understand about real and pretend

- Is developing a sense of humor, loves to hear and tell silly stories
- Loves to ask endless, detailed questions. Often is not interested in detailed answers
- Is comfortable with a group of children for most of the day
- Sometimes tells an adult about art work. Usually indicates that it looks like something

Needs

- Other children their own age to play with, talk with, learn with
- Independence equal to ability, with firm and definite limits surrounding this independence
- Adults who
  Know how to guide a four-year-old in learning at a four-year level
  Help when afraid of the dark, dogs, and some people
  Can direct "out-of-bounds" behavior into constructive channels
  Can interpret the actions and intent of one child to another
  Determine time to stop and rest
- Simple, direct, and honest answers to questions
- Praise for efforts and success in endeavors
- Routines that can be counted on, but flexible schedules to allow for sudden enthusiasms
- Supervision for health and safety
- First-hand experiences in touching, testing, seeing, hearing, and smelling
- A variety of materials that allow for experimentation and manipulation
- Freedom of outdoor play without the restrictions of organized games
- Plenty of time to complete activities without rushing—whether its eating, dressing, building, or painting

About Fives

Physical Development

- Period of slow growth. Body lengthens out and hands and feet grow larger. Girls usually about a year ahead of boys in physical development
- Good general motor control, though small muscles are not so fully developed as large ones
- Sensory-motor equipment usually not ready for reading. Eye-hand coordination improving, but still poor. Apt to be farsighted
- Activity level high
- Attention span still short, but increasing. Little infantile articulation in speech
- Handedness established

Characteristic Behavior

- Stable—good balance between self-sufficiency and sociability
- Home-centered
- Beginning to be capable of self-criticism. Eager and able to carry out some responsibility
- Noisy and vigorous, but activity has definite direction
- Purposeful and constructive—knows what to draw before drawing it
- Uses language well, enjoys dramatic play
- Can wash, dress, eat, and go to the toilet alone, but may need occasional help
- Individuality and lasting traits beginning to be apparent
- Interested in group activity

Needs:

- Assurance in being loved and valued
- Wise guidance
- Opportunity for plenty of activity, equipment for exercising large muscles
- Opportunity to do things for self, freedom to use and develop own powers

- Background training in group effort, in sharing, and in good work habits that will be needed next year in first grade
- Opportunity to learn about world by seeing and doing things
- Kindergarten experience, if possible

About Sixes

Physical Development

- Growth proceeding more slowly, a lengthening out
- Large muscles better developed than small ones
- Eleven to twelve hours of sleep needed
- Eyes not yet mature, tendency toward far-sightedness
- Permanent teeth beginning to appear

- Heart in period of rapid growth
- High activity level—can stay still for short periods only

Characteristic Behavior

- Eager to learn, exuberant, restless, overactive, easily fatigued
- Self-assertive, aggressive, wants to be first, less cooperative than at five, keenly competitive, boastful
- Whole body involved in activities
- Learns best through active participation
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced—regresses when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders
- Inept at activities using small muscles
- Relatively short periods of interest
- Has difficulty making decisions
- Group activities popular, boys' and girls' interests beginning to differ
- Much spontaneous dramatization

Needs:

- Encouragement, ample praise, warmth, and great patience from adults
- Ample opportunity for activity of many kinds, especially for use of large muscles
- Wise supervision with minimum interference
- Friends—by end of period, a best friend
- Concrete learning situations and active, direct participation
- Some responsibilities, but without pressure and without being required to make complicated decisions or achieve rigidly set standards
- Help in developing acceptable manners and habits

About Sevens

Physical Development

- Growth slow and steady
- Annual expected growth in height—two to three inches. In weight—three to six pounds
- Losing teeth. Most seven year olds have their six-year molars
- Better eye-hand coordination
- Better use of small muscles
- Eyes not yet ready for much close work

Characteristic Behavior

- Sensitive to feelings and attitudes of both other children and adults. Especially dependent on approval of adults
- Interests of boys and girls diverging. Less play together
- Full of energy but easily tired, restless and fidgety, often dreamy and absorbed
- Little abstract thinking. Learns best in concrete terms and when active while learning
- Cautious and self-critical, anxious to do things well, likes to use hands
- Talkative, prone to exaggerate, may fight verbally instead of physically, competitive
- Enjoys songs, rhythms, fairy tales, myths, nature stories, comics, television, movies
- Able to assume some responsibility
- Concerned about right and wrong, but may take small things
- Rudimentary understanding of time and monetary values

Needs:

- The right combination of independence and encouraging support
- Chances for active participation in learning situations with concrete objects
- Adult help in adjusting to the rougher ways of the playground without becoming too crude or rough
- Warm, encouraging, friendly relationships with adults
- Acceptance at own level of development

THE PROGRAM

Learning experiences planned with the characteristics and needs of children as a base can help to strengthen and further ensure their success.

As young children grow and develop, with knowledgeable guidance, they become adept at solving their own problems. In addition to parents and guardians, it is the teacher who encourages and skillfully guides the development of behaviors, attitudes, and skills; promotes wholesome, pleasant, shared and independent experiences; and provides activities based on a thorough knowledge of child growth, development, age and maturation appropriateness.

Broad goals of an effective early childhood program should enable children to:

— develop and maintain a positive feeling about themselves and about their own abilities to create and to learn

— expand their awareness of the world around them through many sensory experiences—opportunities to see, hear, taste, feel, smell—which are prerequisites for developing concepts and solving problems

— develop language through listening, speaking, and dramatic play activities which form the basis for reading, writing, and other communication skills

— develop maximum physical growth and health through motor activities and proper nutrition

— understand their strengths and limitations; cope with success, failure and change

— express verbal and non-verbal feelings, such as joy, happiness, fear, and anger in acceptable ways

— see themselves as a part of mankind and show respect and concern for the rights and property of others

— develop a reverence for life

— become self-directing, with the ability to use freedom by providing them with opportunities to explore, create, and make choices.

Program objectives, activities and assessment within these broad goals will vary according to children's chronological age and development level. It is essential that teachers clearly define objectives for children in order to plan curriculum, assess individual progress, and evaluate program effectiveness. Early childhood education programs should include provisions for developmental variability in children but be cognizant of objectives that are appropriate to their age level and toward which they should be progressing.

KINDERGARTEN

Four- and five-year-old children in the '80s are more experienced, socially adept, and physically competent than their counterparts years ago. Television, increased mobility, an abundance of books and toys, preschool experience, improved nutrition, and preventive medicine—all have affected early childhood education. Whether children live in the inner city, suburbs, small town, or rural area, they have experienced some of this cultural change.

The changing needs of four- and five-year-olds have provided impetus for much rethinking of the instructional program in the kindergarten. A successful program is based on a careful appraisal of each child's capabilities and needs which determine his or her level of readiness for learning. The "problem of the match," which Hunt describes as crucial, is that of finding the most stimulating circumstances for each child at each point in development. Kindergarten should be as exciting and challenging for the five-year-old who has had a rich preschool experience as for the child leaving home for the first time.

Providing this match implies differentiated instruction in the kindergarten. For those children with a high level of visual, auditory, and cognitive skill competence and who are motivated and mature enough to learn to read without difficulty, beginning reading instruction is appropriate. Reading in the kindergarten should acknowledge the child's natural curiosity about words, relate to interests and experiences and provide instruction in an informal setting.

Personalized teaching implies small group instruction, which, in turn, requires that children be able to work independently while others work under the teacher's guidance. Children should be introduced early to the experience of listening to directions and proceeding on their own. The independent work time can be one of the happiest and most rewarding periods in the day. It is a time of achievement. It requires that the child learn to complete a task and to work along or cooperate with others, sharing ideas and materials—to become a self-directed learner.

The teacher sets the tone and the expectations by which children learn to work individually and in small groups.

Organization of materials in advance and clear understanding of individual or group responsibility are essential to success. Parents, older students, or teacher aides can effectively assist in preparing and organizing the day's materials before school begins. The children, however, should feel that the room belongs to them and that they are responsible for the care of supplies and the appearance of the room. They need to know where to put completed work, how to get additional supplies, and what activities they may pursue without disturbing others. Parent volunteers, teacher, or student aides can be invaluable as resource persons, responding to children's needs and facilitating learning while the teacher works with an individual or small group.

Games to be used as independent activities should be introduced and played under the direction of the teacher or aide. The number of children who may play a game or engage in a particular activity at one time can be indicated by dots or numerals marked on the game or activity area.

Full-Day Kindergarten

Historically, kindergarten began as a full-day program. In 1977 the Maryland State Department of Education piloted the full-day kindergarten in several local school districts in Maryland. A study of full-day programs conducted by State Education Department personnel indicated that the extended day kindergarten yielded:

- a better balanced, less hurried program that allowed for a variety of approaches to learning
- more individual attention at an age when this is crucial
- added opportunity for reinforcing and extending learning
- more time for children to explore and discover on their own
- increased academic potential for first grade

The Classroom Environment

Planning for young children is the privilege as well as the responsibility of the teacher or teaching team. Space allocations and arrangement of furnishings and equipment are used to accomplish the specific goals of the anticipated program. Learning experiences in all areas of the curriculum are enhanced by the arrangement of furniture and equipment to provide a functional, attractive, and flexible environment. The environment is a stimulus for learning, yet relaxed, orderly, and a motivator for children to use materials. It should be both attractive and functional. The atmosphere should be friendly, yet be a place where a great deal of learning takes place.

Consideration must be given to what is supposed to happen within the environment. The program, including scheduling and grouping, the curriculum, the children, and their needs are paramount in planning.

Decisions about room arrangements must be related to the amount of space available for the program. Space for learning must be organized with an understanding of children's growth patterns and interests. Adequate space for a variety of activities which provide for all areas of a child's development is essential inasmuch as the physical surroundings affect children and their learning.

An effective method for space organization is the arrangement of learning centers to maximize space and materials. Types of learning centers and interest areas will vary depending on the needs of children and the curriculum.

The following centers are generally needed to accomplish the goals of early childhood programs:

- Library Center
- Construction and Workshop Center
- Games Center
- Science and Numbers Center
- Craft and Art Center
- Music Center
- Social Studies Center
- Gross Movement Center
- Quiet Center
- Other centers may be Block, Dramatic Play, Audio Visual, and Listening

These centers are basic, but will be varied during the year. Centers as well as interest areas might be temporarily keyed to the purpose of the curriculum and changed as necessary. Activity areas should have the potential for expansion, reduction, and elimination, and should have facility for movement out and in.

The height and eye level of children should determine the height of display space and placement of materials for independent use by the children.

Clutter and equipment in need of repair and not useable by children have no place in the learning environment.

Library Center. Here, pupils should be allowed to browse for picture books, look at pictures, turn pages, listen to stories, talk about stories read to them, role play story book characters, and learn some simple rules about using the library and how to care for books. It is a place where language usage and interest in books should be enhanced. Audio-visual materials, such as slides, viewers, projectors, tape recorders, and all other AV materials useful to children, could be placed in the library center or in a separate center.

Construction and Workshop Center. Both boys and girls will be interested in this area. It is for all to share. Blocks, trucks, tractors, construction sets, tinker toys, tool sets, sandbox, and other building materials make up the supplies for this area. It is hoped that the child will begin to learn the principles of balance and proportion. Creativity is fostered here. This area reflects the current interest of the child.

Games Center. All boxed games, checkers, dominoes, marbles, balls (large rubber), puzzles, cards, etc., are displayed here for easy access by the children. This center encourages learning to play together, playing independently, sharing things, and learning how to care for things.

Science and Numbers Center. Chalk boards, felt board, cones, cubes, rulers, number cards, beads, balls, magnetic board, Cuisenaire rods, Stern blocks, magnets, insect collections, aquariums, terrariums, pet hutches, balance scales, and containers of varying capacity (both English and Metric measurement) comprise some of the supplies in this center. These materials may be changed as children seek to learn about new things and as they bring items from home. Magnifying glasses, rock collections, and microscopes are kept here in order to encourage experimentation with science apparatus. Children learn to solve problems of science and numbers, ask questions, probe, and explore and find answers for themselves in the see and numbers center. An outside garden and indoor boxes for planting seeds may be considered part of the science center. This center encourages the children to be curious about natural and man-made forces.

Craft and Art Center. Art supplies, leather, soap carvings, wood carvings, paint, easels and brushes, lots of paint and paper for finger painting, wire, crayons of all colors, clay, paper, scissors, and water colors comprise part of the supplies here. An appreciation for art and the development of interest and skills in creative work will be stimulated in this center. It is hoped the child will learn to be self-reliant in the use of materials and to express ideas in his or her own way. Colors and textures are also learned while at this center.

Music Center. Ukes, banjos, drums, horns, cymbals, xylophones, castanets, bells, harps, and pianos are part of the "band" equipment found here. Records, record players and tapes, vocal numbers and dance tunes make up the repertoire to entice the future musician to this corner. Many skills related to music and rhythm are enhanced here, plus a lot of healthy socialization. It is hoped that the child will learn to participate in some types of music and to listen to many forms of music, learning to relax, release emotions, clap, and keep time to music.

Social Studies Center. Posters, maps, globe, pictures of community people such as police, firefighters, airplane pilots, nurses, doctors, mail carriers, farmers, etc., pictures of mountains, rivers, streams, parks, and forests all make up the supplies. Concepts of social awareness may have their beginnings in this center, along with some understanding about other people in other places. The children should be encouraged to tell about personal experiences connected with a topic of interest. They should begin to understand people of other places and times.

Gross Movement Center. Climbing bars, very light-weight lifting equipment, balance bars to walk on, ladders for climbing, tunnels for crawling, jump ropes, tumbling mats, and teeter totters make up part of the list of materials for this area. These items may be moved into the center of the room for easy access. Large muscle development and body coordination are just two of the important developmental concerns enhanced here.

Quiet Center. At least one quiet area should be provided for a child who needs time to be away from the group. Such an area could be provided behind the piano, for example.

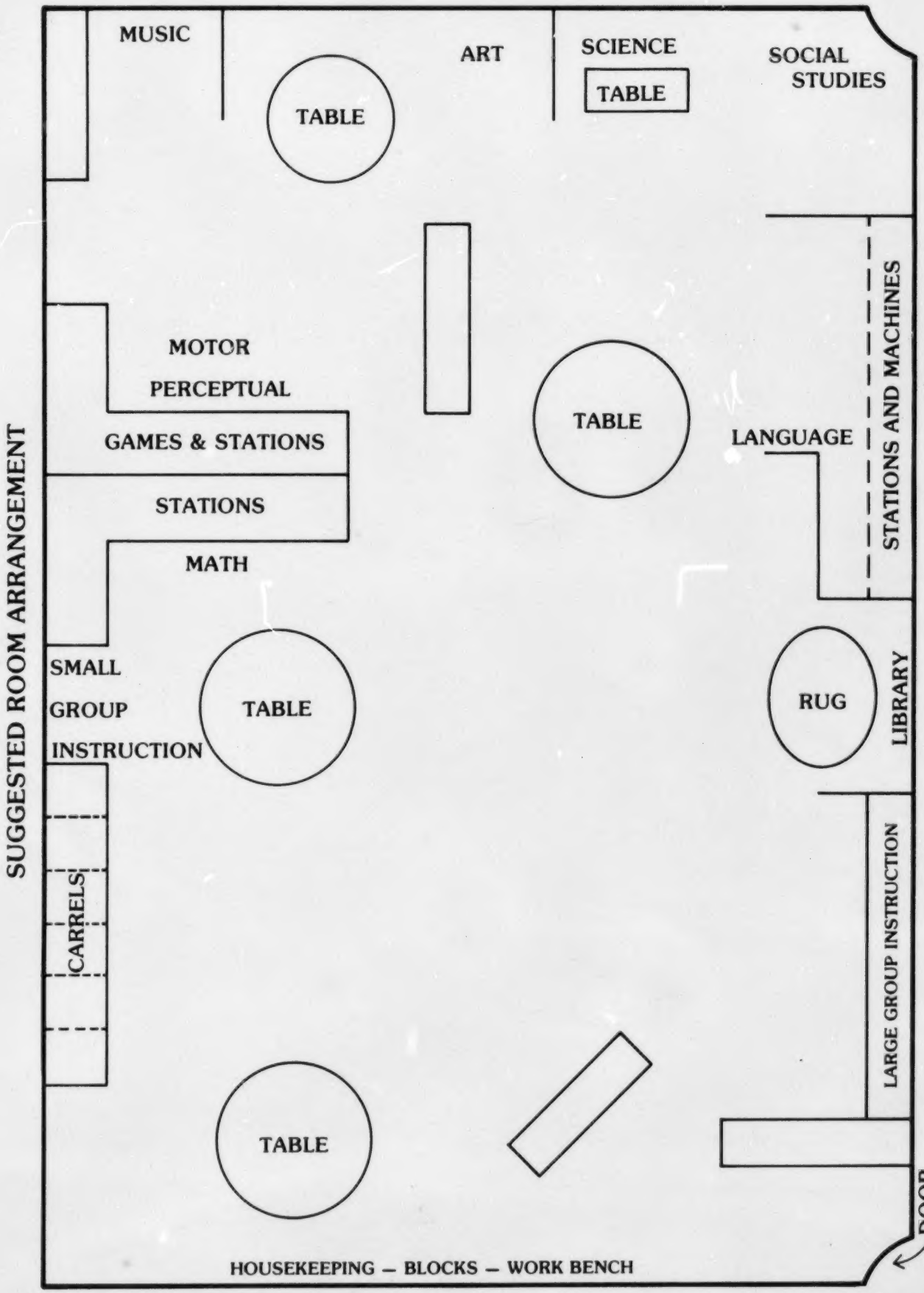
In early childhood programs the environment is much more than the physical setting. It fosters and facilitates the young child's learning; the interpersonal as well as physical factors. It nurtures learning and facilitates trust and respect for the dignity and worth of each child.

Scheduling

A useful means for planning is the daily schedule. The classroom environment should provide areas which correspond to the instructional periods defined by the schedule. It should be organized to provide the best situation possible.

Scheduling involves providing and arranging time and opportunity for continuous learning with variations for individual needs, interests, and prescribed activities. It necessitates giving consideration to balance, transition, and continuity of activities.

Teachers must be aware of whether a balance exists among curriculum content areas: self selected, teacher directed, and individualized activities. Provisions should be made for small and large group experiences and for active and quiet periods. Smoothly moving or changing children from one activity to another requires extensive planning and preparation by the teacher or teaching team.


SUGGESTED ROOM ARRANGEMENT
MUSIC
ART
SCIENCE
TABLE
SOCIAL STUDIES
TABLE
MOTOR
PERCEPTUAL
GAMES & STATIONS
STATIONS
MATH
TABLE
LANGUAGE
STATIONS AND MACHINES
SMALL
GROUP
INSTRUCTION
TABLE
RUG
LIBRARY
CARRELS
LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION
TABLE
DOOR
HOUSEKEEPING — BLOCKS — WORK BENCH

SAMPLE SCHEDULE — THREE HOUR PREKINDERGARTEN

Time Block	Learning Experiences
10-15 minutes	Opening, preparation for the day, removing wraps and placing in cubbies, matching name cards for attendance, nametags, sharing experiences.
45 minutes	Small group instruction. The teacher or teaching team provides small group instruction in language, concept development, and readiness skills according to children's levels of readiness. Follow-up activities to be completed independently or in a small group.
30 minutes	Independent activity time. This time provides opportunities for the children to self-select activities such as ***Art Media:*** paints, crayons, playdough, clay, newsprint, drawing paper, construction paper, paper, scissors, paste/glue, collage materials, and chalk should be available each day. Other art media - easel painting, sponge painting, finger painting, cut and paste; ***Blocks and Block Accessories; Housekeeping:*** dolls, telephones, cooking utensils, dishes, and dress-ups; ***Sand/Water Table:*** funnels, plastic containers, cans, measuring cups, shovels; ***Woodworking:*** soft wood, roofing nails, actual tools, locks, hinges; ***Science Center:*** prisms, simple machines, seeds, soil, leaves, shells, rocks, magnets, cooking, magnifying glass; ***Manipulatives:*** puzzles, pegs/peg boards, beads, nesting blocks, sewing cards, games for reading and math readiness; ***Library Center:*** books appropriate to interests and developmental needs, cassettes.
20 minutes	Change of pace, songs, musical instruments, rhythms, gross motor activities (may alternate).
10-15 minutes	Activities of games related to units of study.
30 minutes	Supervised outdoor play, weather permitting.
10-15 minutes	Listening to music. Some children may need a rest, others do not.
10-20 minutes	Story and poetry time, dramatization. Evaluation of the day.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE — THREE HOUR KINDERGARTEN

Time Block	Learning Experiences
15-20 minutes	Opening, planning the day. Sharing experiences can be included in this time, but should be purposeful and not involve all children at one sitting.
60 minutes (may be broken into smaller blocks)	Small group instruction. The teacher or teaching team provides small group instruction in language and reading skill development, perceptual skill development, or math and science concepts, according to children's level of readiness. Follow-up activities to be completed independently may be related to the small group instruction or other tasks appropriate to the particular needs of children. Upon completion of a designated task, children may choose from a variety of activities according to the plans for that day. Adult or student aides can effectively assist with art activities, a listening station, visual-motor activities, and other learning experiences while the teacher is engaged with a small group.
20 minutes	Music, rhythms, gross motor activities (may alternate). A minimum of one session per week with both music and physical education specialists is recommended. This is supplemented by teacher-directed activities in both areas.
20 minutes	Supervised outdoor play, weather permitting.
20 minutes	Independent activity time. This time provides an opportunity for children to be engaged in learning centers according to their interests. The teacher, in observing the children, takes her cues from them as to how he/she may best be involved. This period may sometimes be used for TV, films, and filmstrips. The teacher may want to use this period to give individual help, as needed, as a follow-up of the small group instruction.
10-15 minutes	Activities or games related to units of study.
10 minutes	Change of pace, if and when needed. May be relaxation while listening to music. Some children may need a short rest, others do not.
15-20 minutes	Story and poetry time, dramatization. Evaluation of the day. Teachers may choose to use this small group instruction time block one day a week for directed art activities and other learning experiences related to social studies or other units of study. One directed art activity a week by the art specialist, if possible, is considered adequate for children this age. They should have many opportunities throughout the week to work freely and creatively with art materials.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE — FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Time Block	Learning Experiences
20 minutes	Opening, lunch count, planning the day.
60 minutes	Small group instruction in language and reading skill development. Related independent work activities followed by choice from a number of options. Adult or student aides can act as resource persons for children working independently and may engage in small group learning activities with children who are not working with the teacher.
20 minutes	Outdoor play, weather permitting.
10 minutes	Quiet time, music appreciation or snack.
30 minutes	Social studies acitivities, science, art, dramatization, films (alternating).
20 minutes	Music, rhythms, gross motor activities, alternating days. A minimum of one session per week with both physical and music specialists is recommended. Teacher directed activities continue through the week in these areas.
60 minutes	Lunch. Outdoor play. Quiet time — rest, relaxation to music or story. Teacher aide or parent volunteer assistance can provide duty free lunch period for teacher.
60 minutes	Small group learning activities in math, visual-motor and auditory skill development according to children's needs. Student or adult aides may assist as with the morning small group instruction time.
30 minutes	Independent activity time. Children are engaged in learning centers according to their interests. This may include dictating or recording experience stories, doing science experiments, using the listening station, or doing other activities that enrich and extend learning. The teacher may want to give individual help during this period as needed.
20 minutes	Story, closing, evaluating the day. After dismissal of children, teacher activities include: Home visits Conferences with parents Program planning and evaluation of progress Planning with other team members and volunteer assistants

Grouping and Assessing

Teachers must continuously determine the most appropriate procedure for dividing time among individuals and groups. Fairness suggests attention to: 1) shy children who do not ask for help as well as those who do, and children who are too demanding of attention, 2) children who seem not to benefit from assistance as well as ones who obviously do, 3) children who progress slowly as well as those who excel. Attention must be given to instructional procedures which provide alternatives so that needs of all children are adequately met.

Assignment to groups must be based on initial assessments that provide at least information regarding the children's present levels of skill attainment and areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Initial assignments should not be considered permanent assignments but rather starting places. Teachers are to be trained observers. Daily observation over a span of time along with adequate assessments will ensure a total picture of the entire child; strengths, weaknesses, abilities, successes and learning styles.

Changes in scheduling and grouping should be an outgrowth of observation and assignment.

THE CURRICULUM

Careful observation plus a sound knowledge of child growth and development will be paramount in determining the activities, materials and general experiences necessary for the optimal development of children. There should be planned sequence of experiences for developing children's skills to the utmost of their abilities. Specific skills must be defined so that the level of development for all children may be assessed and reassessed whenever necessary.

The curriculum should be aimed at developing the full range of each child's ability including cognitive skills, ways of finding and using information, perceptual ability, motor skills, social skills, and effective sensitivity. Specifics in each area will depend on the identified needs of individual children, recognizing that development and materials are the keys to what happens in the Early Childhood Programs.

At age four, some children may be immersed in the perceptual motor learning of a three-year-old. Others are reaching out to learn many of the symbolic skills of first grade. This example relates throughout the early childhood grades. Programs should be flexible enough to stimulate interest in every child, yet be specific reflecting an awareness of the precise accomplishments of a particular child.

When the curriculum is flexible enough to apply to different situations and adaptable so as to teach each child, it becomes the tool that smooths the transition of theory into practice. A curriculum is not intended to accomplish the intelligent structuring and restructuring of learning realities. That can only occur in the classroom. It must leave room for both the student's and the teacher's creativity and interpretation, as well as provide step by step information relevant to the stages of intellectual development.

Curriculum content should emphasize the following basic concepts:

Development of intellectual skills by—

Encouraging children to solve problems, initiate activities, explore, experiment, question and gain mastery through learning by doing.

Promoting language development and understanding that encourages optimal levels for oral and written communication.

Encouraging children to organize their experiences and master concepts. The sequence of classroom activities should progress from simple to more complex tasks, and from concrete to abstract concepts. Prekindergarten and kindergarten children will be working toward the goal of recognition of symbols for letters and numbers according to their individual abilities.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The amount and quality of a child's language development reflects the home and community in which the child lives.

An early childhood education classroom should be language centered. In fact, language development might be considered the primary function of the prekindergarten and kindergarten program. The most effective approach is to promote firsthand experiences that will give meaning to words to insure future success in school.

When children enter school, the teacher's responsibility is to create learning situations in which children are encouraged to develop, expand and refine their use of words and sentence patterns.

Children's "failure" frequently is caused by lack of communication skills. Particular attention should be given to the child who is "linguistically different," that is, who speaks a language or a dialect that is significantly different from standard English. These children enter school with a distinct disadvantage and the type of program initiated depends upon the specific needs of the individual child.

Language skills usually stem from direct instruction: specified aspects of listening and speaking along with the components of reading and writing. Language skills are usually not taught directly in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Language and all that it incorporates must be paramount in all early childhood education programs. Prekindergarten and kindergarten curriculums must provide early language experiences that lay the foundation for reading as well as writing. Spoken language is the basis of language development. Early Childhood Programs must clearly emphasize the spoken language and then lead the child to reading and writing.

Children's vocabulary increases through the contacts and activities in which they participate. As in all other areas, it is suggested that special attention be given to language development, particularly in the Library-AV Center, an excellent place

to enhance language experiences. Nearly every item in the room should be labeled. Calendars, thermometers, clocks, desks, tables, chairs, and toys are but a few items that should be identified by names on labels. Children should be asked to identify objects, and the teacher should assist them to recognize words that identify objects and help them to properly handle books and turn pages.

While language development is a special activity in itself, it should also be a major objective of all planned activities. This development can be facilitated through speaking, listening, writing, and reading activities appropriate to each child's developmental capabilities.

READINESS SKILLS IN LANGUAGE

1. Developing awareness of oral words as language units. For example, "gimmethe" is three separate words.
2. Enriching oral vocabulary.
3. Strengthening meaning associations.
4. Formulating sentences.
5. Organizing ideas into language units.
6. Using narrative expressions.
7. Improving articulation.
8. Developing sensitivity to inflectional variants.
9. Developing awareness of sentence structure.

Reading

Reading is perhaps the most important language art skill. The Maryland State Department of Education believes that formalized reading instruction is for those children who are cognitively and developmentally ready regardless of their age. A good early childhood education program will include reading in ways that are appropriate for that child's development.

We now know that it is improper to pinpoint a specific age at which reading should universally begin for all children. The question that dominated this issue in past years was "Should we teach kindergarteners to read?" It is more appropriate in the 1980s to ask, "To which preschool/kindergarten children should reading be taught?" and "What kind of instruction for these children?" A paramount role for the teacher, however, is to foster the interest of every child to want to learn to read.

For children ready and eager to read, appropriate instruction must be provided, including graphic representation of direct oral language experiences within the classroom.

Examples	
Labeling (It is helpful to use short phrases or sentences)	Our Turtle House Janet's New Painting
Experience Charts (A shared classroom experience)	Our Trip We went to the farm. We saw chickens. We saw eggs. We watched the eggs hatch.

Using written language, which directly correlates with the language, thought and speech of children and comes from classroom based experiences, is the most beneficial way to make the association between oral language and print.

Effective reading instruction for young children, who are ready and able to read, must equip them with the necessary foundation of skills to insure their initial achievement.

Skill

Handle books.

Identify that the words in books printed in English go from left to right, from top to bottom of the page.

Read some of the greetings in greeting cards.

Read some short experience stories.

Identify the letters and the sounds of letters.

Read number names.

Pick out favorite books and stories by learning key words in the title.

Identify color names.

Match letters, words, and pictures.

Use visual discrimination.

Use directionality and gain experiences in eye-hand coordination.

Identify basic sight words in reading some simple stories.

Discriminate different word sounds, such as in dramas, pantomimes, puppets, whispering, and singing.

Activity

Display attractive books in the center.

Permit children to handle and to look at books and to turn the pages. While they do this, point out that the words go left to right and from top to bottom of the page.

Read to children the greetings in Christmas cards, birthday cards, etc. Ask them if they would like to try to read their own cards. Help them if they are interested in trying.

Assist children in learning the letters in their name and reading their names.

Ask children to follow you in reading their experience stories that have been written on the board.

Emphasize sounds of letters for those who are interested.

Place letters on bulletin board display. When children are standing around looking at these, ask them if they would like to know how the letter sounds in a word. If they respond positively, sound out the letters for them and ask them to repeat the sounds. Repeat a similar procedure with numbers and number names.

Ask children to select a book they really like. Ask them to look at the title and the pictures and to tell you what they think the story is about. Follow by reading the story to them. Ask questions. Ask them to add to it or change the ending to be more exciting.

Ask children to develop a color chart. Ask them to tell you the colors.

Instructional Approaches to Reading (Ages 6 and up)

Experience with various materials and students demonstrates that there is no one best program for teaching reading, and that there is no one best program for a single class. Teachers are challenged to match the techniques and materials with the children's modalities for learning and with the objectives to be achieved.

The Language Experience Approach (LEA)

The language experience approach to beginning reading instruction uses children's abilities to communicate their experiences through oral language, written language, artistic ability, and dramatic ability. This approach to reading is based on the concept that reading has the most meaning to students when the materials being read are expressed in the their own language and are outgrowths of personal experiences. Children are introduced to reading instruction by group or individually dictated experience stories which in the early stages become the basic source of reading material. From this material, a sight vocabulary is developed which is unique in that each child develops a reading vocabulary commensurate with the individual's own capacity, interest, and oral language facility.

The language experience approach can also be used with students who are beyond the beginning stages of reading instruction. A group or an individually dictated story after a shared experience provides needed reading materials. Vocabulary and comprehension can be taught using these student produced materials.

The Basal Approach

Basal readers are the most widely used materials for teaching reading. The books are carefully graded in difficulty and the vocabularies are controlled so that not too many unfamiliar words are presented in a single lesson, with manuals for teachers offering many teaching suggestions. The basal readers deal with all phases of the reading program—assessment, word recognition, comprehension, oral reading, silent reading, reading for information, and reading for enjoyment.

Instruction in basal readers employs the Directed Reading—Thinking Activity (DRTA). The DRTA is intended to develop a child's abilities to read critically and reflectively. It attempts to equip readers with the ability to determine the purpose for reading; to extract, comprehend, and assimilate information; to examine reading material based upon the purposes for reading; to suspend judgments; and to make decisions based upon information gleaned from reading.

The group receiving instruction should be separated from those students working independently to avoid distractions. Teachers and children should be seated so that all members of the group can hear and be heard during the discussions.

The group interaction of the DRTA not only contributes to the children's reading skills development, but also to their socialization as they work together to interpret the ideas of the author and to share their reactions to these ideas.

For developmental reading instruction, a small group of three to five is appropriate for those making slower progress in reading and needing the closer attention of the teacher. Groups of eight to ten students are effective for those children making average progress, while above average readers can work effectively in groups of up to fifteen. The size of each reading group should be determined by the needs of the children. Most teachers seem to agree four groups should be the maximum per classroom without assistance from additional personnel.

Content area teachers using the DRTA technique may consider total class participation during the readiness step and the use of small buzz-groups following the silent reading. The size of the group influences the amount of participation of each student, so the teacher is encouraged to devise opportunities for small group discussion following the reading.

The Individualized Reading Approach

Individualized reading is an effective approach if organized to include self-selection, self-pacing skills instruction, record keeping, child-teacher conferences, sharing activities, and independent work. It is designed to foster independent reading in a variety of materials, such as trade books, magazines, newspapers and other reading materials. The objective of individualized reading is to promote the fullest development of the child's skills and interest along with positive attitudes toward reading.

Literature

As children learn to read, they can be encouraged to develop reading skills on their own

- for the pure pleasure of reading and listening to poems, prose, and stories
- for sharing what is read with teachers and peers through dramatization and recordings
- to expand their vocabulary.

Children should be encouraged to visit the community and school libraries, to borrow books, and to purchase books to build their own library collection. The teacher should use the services of the school's media specialist to provide interesting books for the children. A quiet area in the classroom with plants, pictures, rocking chairs, area rugs, cushions, and a display of books will encourage the children's desire to read.

As children learn to read on their own, adults should continue to read to them and tell them stories. Reading to children helps expand their vocabulary, develop oral language, and extend their knowledge and comprehension and builds in them the value and importance of reading.

Whichever reading approach or combination of approaches is chosen there will be inherent advantages and disadvantages. We recommend that the approach(es) chosen be based on the assessed needs of the children and that attention be given to providing a reading program that is sequenced and structured to meet the needs of all children.

Regardless of the instructional approach, each child should receive daily reading instruction for at least sixty minutes. This period includes direct teacher instruction and follow-up activities which include skills, extension, and enrichment. All follow-up activities should be directly related to the reading lesson.

There are many supplementary materials available which can be used to support all the instructional approaches described above. If such materials are selected for purchase, teachers should choose those which accompany the basal reader in use. Workbooks and comprehension skill booklet assignments should be used only as reinforcement to skills taught during the teacher-directed lesson.

There are also a wide variety of enrichment materials available, such as trade books, magazines, and audiovisual aids which can be used to enhance and support the reading program.

Handwriting/Spelling

The most effective instructional technique for teaching children to write, either manuscript or cursive, is small group directed lessons followed by supervised practice. The teacher demonstrates the correct formation of each letter (repeating several times) either on the blackboard or an overhead projector. Following the demonstration, the teacher "talks through" the formation of the letter as the children practice. Each child in the group is then given the opportunity to demonstrate the formation of the letter. Once the teacher has observed each child make the letter correctly several times, the children are ready for independent practice.

Correct handwriting is dependent upon learning the sequence of lines and curves for each letter. Children need the time and opportunity to transform the newly acquired skills into habits.

An appropriate variety of writing materials, comfortable writing positions, erect posture, and abundant practice are essential ingredients in developing handwriting skills. Practice formation of manuscript and cursive capital and lower case letters and combinations of letters should be taught when individual children have acquired the necessary small muscle development and express the need.

Mathematics

Young children must have concrete objects to manipulate and use in mathematics. They live in a world of concrete objects and from these objects they must find ways of being understood through mathematical reasoning.

Mathematics must be an integrated part of every program experience if the full benefits of the program are to be realized. Teachers should correlate mathematical concepts with such daily experiences as stories, songs, art, outdoor activities and snack time.

The following concepts can be understood by children and used in suitable activities:

Beginning Quantitative Concepts

A. Size
   1. Big, little
   2. Larger than, smaller than
   3. Longer than, shorter than
   4. Area and linear aspects of size

B. Quantity
   1. Many, few
   2. More, less

Early childhood materials and equipment come in many sizes. Balls come in a number of sizes from marble size to baseball size. Animals and plants change in size as they grow. Long, short, thick, thin, wide and narrow are terms that grow out of daily experiences and can be developed with a variety of materials.

How much, how little, few, more, whole, and same are only a few of the terms dealing with quantity that must be incorporated into the learning program.

Beginning Geometric Concepts

Shapes
   1. Square
   2. Circle
   3. Rectangle
   4. Points
   5. Triangle
   6. Lines
   7. Ordering according to size and shapes

Geometric figures are all around us and need to be capitalized on by the teacher. Understanding of geometric concepts grows out of experiences with blocks, paper containers and games. Teachers must see that all these opportunities are provided in the daily program.

Beginning Set Concepts

A. Sets as collections of objects
B. Quantitative comparison of two sets
C. Quantitative comparison of more than two sets
D. One to one correspondence
E. Equivalent sets
F. Sets having "one more than"

The set theory can be introduced to children by grouping for certain duties or activities, e.g., using crayons and playing with sets of dishes including different items and parts as subset of the whole set. These are terms which must be planned for and incorporated into the program by the teacher.

Beginning Number Concepts

A. Counting rote
B. Ordering according to idea of one-more-than
C. Cardinal number
D. Rational counting
E. Counting - identification
F. Counting - reproduction
G. Recognition of numerals
H. Ordinal number

The order and position of objects, numbers and numerals should be made meaningful to children. Understanding of ordinal and cardinal numbers is developed through being first in line or third from the end or counting the number of children in various activities.

Beginning Concepts of Basic Operation

A. Addition
B. Subtraction

Adding and subtracting will become meaningful to children as they add one more chair to the circle, take away crayons from the box, etc.

Beginning Concepts of Measurement

A. Linear
   1. Longer, shorter
   2. Farther, nearer

B. Volume
   1. Cup
   2. Pint
   3. Quart
   4. Gallon

C. Weight
   1. Heavy, light
   2. Pound

D. Fractional Parts
   1. ½
   2. ⅓
   3. ¼

E. Time
   1. Early, late
   2. Day, week
   3. Hour, minute
   4. Yesterday, tomorrow

Many opportunities for liquid measurement can be provided, such as a big jar for water play and little jar for juice. Terms such as one cup, one-half cup, or one-fourth cup take on significance as children measure ingredients. If allowed to measure butter or margarine for making cookies, children can learn how much a pound or a fourth of a pound is. They can learn also that a half dozen eggs is six, etc. From cutting up an apple they can learn about fractional parts.

Positional Relationships

A. Under
B. On top of
C. Above
D. Behind
E. In front of
F. In the middle of
G. Between

The knowledge of whether an object is on, over, above, under, near, in front of, in back of, in the middle or behind will broaden and expand children's mathematical concepts.

Games such as "I spy" can be helpful in teaching positional concepts if appropriate discussion follows. Where was the object hidden? On top of or below and other positional words and their meanings are useful when children are introduced to the printed pages when working with numbers.

Money

A. Names of coins
B. Values of coins

Many children can readily identify coins such as a penny, a nickel and a dime. With experience they learn which ones purchase more or less. Coin value should be introduced on a limited scale according to the age, experience and readiness of the children.

Young children must have experiences with concrete objects before they can move to the abstract reasoning and the use of paper and pencil. Each level must be an expansion and continuation of the previous level.

SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

A major goal of Early Childhood Education is to help young children broaden their social environment through guided and directed opportunities to live, play, and work with other children of varied backgrounds and experiences. Four and five year olds are naturally curious about things around them. Teachers have the responsibility for providing experiences that will both enhance and gratify the curiosity that children possess.

Social learning, development of values, history, geography, anthropology and sociology are all topics that can be included under the general heading of social studies. Like other content areas social studies must be enhanced as much as possible through real experiences.

The learning in this area should be "now" oriented, practical and meaningful in that it is pulled from real life experiences. Children can learn to accept strangeness without hostility. They can understand that people are really very much alike even with the differences they see on the surface.

History

In order for teachers to succeed in helping young children develop a sense of history, topics of concern will have to be developed around the interest and experience of the children. Teachers supported by parents can talk about ancestors and their lives. They can share in collecting and viewing of pictures,old and new. They can talk about and visit old buildings and historic places in the community. Many easy-to-read books are available on historic themes, such as Columbus, Washington, etc. It is important for children to make sense out of all they see and hear.

New interest may be stimulated by utilizing selected media such as films, games, trips and cartoons that appeal to young children. When children are provided with learning that appeals and fascinates them, they gradually come to sense and grasp the significance of change and are more likely to develop a continuing interest and enthusiasm for history.

Geography

Young children enjoy the manipulation of maps, puzzles, globes, and tools which keep them exploring and growing in knowledge. Various geographical concepts fit frequently, almost naturally, with the exploratory nature of young children and can assist in expanding their interest beyond home and school.

Anthropology

Developing understanding relevant to the family and the family structure are concepts to be gained from anthropology and sociology. The homemaking center, visible in most early childhood centers, is a most appropriate place for developing concepts about the family. Role playing, dressing in various clothes, depicting various family roles, making rules and discussing family members are all a part of important learning in this area.

Money, toys, food, clothes and pets can all be a part of concrete experiences and discussions that can enhance children's understanding of families and their relations to other people.

Science

Science study acquaints children with the process of science and helps them

(1) become curious about their world,
(2) conceptualize the natural physical world,
(3) develop skills of observation, interpretation, and classification,
(4) recognize and use science tools correctly,
(5) extend problem-solving ability,
(6) use five senses for discovery and learning,
(7) acquire a science vocabulary, and
(8) develop a sense of responsibility and concern for the world and living things,

Health and Safety

The health education instructional program has been designed to provide an opportunity for children to develop a concept of optimal health that will be functional for them now and as they grow.

The health and safety curriculum will assist children in
(1) practicing good safety rules and health habits,
(2) becoming aware of the worth of themselves,
(3) noting similarities and differences in an individual and his/her parents,
(4) taking care of the body through exercise, nutrition, and proper medical care,
(5) becoming aware of family roles,
(6) noting changes that occur through growth and development
(7) being knowledgeable about products that are helpful or harmful to the body, and
(8) using senses to help them become aware of the world around them.

In some school districts the above learnings may be part of the social living or science content area. As long as the educational system assists children in developing and maintaining optimal health, the content area in which it is taught makes little difference.

Art

Art is an excellent means through which children from all backgrounds can readily communicate. Through art children can clarify and refine ideas about their world. As they explore the qualities of paints, paper and clay they build concepts. As they work with play dough or clay they experience wetness, softness, and plasticity. Concepts of acting upon become meaningful as they push in, pull out, pound, roll and shape.

Motor control, visual discrimination and the recognition of spatial relationships are developed through art activities.

Art activities should be carried on daily. Aside from self-motivated participation in these activities, the teacher must demonstrate, ask students to show, to talk about, and in general, encourage participation so that skills can be developed.

These activities should be enjoyable as well as useful to the children. Language, social and physical skills, creative talents and mechanical aptitudes can be enhanced through art experiences.

Music

Teachers must adopt music experiences to the maturity and interest of the children and allow freedom and opportunity for creative expression and extensive experimentation.

A music program for young children should contain a balance of experiences, including singing, rhythms, listening and responding, as well as music appreciation.

Most children will gradually develop a sensitivity to pitch, repeat patterns, moods, tone-matching, and rhythm by participating in singing, musical games, and other creative musical activities. A rich setting must be provided that contains many informal opportunities for children to experiment with sound and movement, both individually and in groups. Teachers must also be willing to accept children's creative musical ventures being careful not to judge by adult performance standards.

For young children the experience of participating in musical activities is far more important than the end product. Musical experiences should result in a positive attitude toward music, a better understanding of music, and a greater skill in expressing music.

THE WORLD OF WORK

Children begin to acquire a general background of experiences about the world of work through their play, imagery, and make-believe activities. They talk often about what they want to be when they grow up. This is an excellent time for teachers and parents to help children develop positive attitudes and values about work. They can be encouraged to pretend they are different workers in their make-believe worlds, both at home and at school. Teachers can help children learn about work in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment by providing appropriate games, tools, toys, clothes, and pictures and by stimulating their thinking through talking and asking and answering questions about work. Community helpers are excellent for this purpose; pre-planning of field-trips with workers at specific sites are also excellent for this purpose.

THE TEAM

It is not possible for one person or program to handle the responsibilities of meeting the needs of all children in a classroom or school program.

It is critical that all of the adults who contribute to the child's learning—teachers, parents, nurses, aides, volunteers, and other school personnel associated with the program—establish and maintain good communication and cooperation and function effectively as a team.

Effective networking or teaming of such persons eliminates self-protective isolation. The effectiveness of a given program or activity often depends on the presence or absence of other related services, a concept which suggests hard work, careful planning and skill. It involves goal setting, solution finding, implementation, and evaluation, as well as communication, negotiation, and sharing.

A well planned and well coordinated program must be based on mutually established goals and objectives. Teacher aides, parents, students, and adult volunteers serve to augment the teacher. Functioning under the teacher's supervision, they can multiply the teacher's effectiveness without risk to the program. Preservice and inservice training of aides and volunteers in the philosophy, goals, and methods of the program is essential for persons working cooperatively to promote optimal growth in children.

The planning process must include what is to be accomplished, who is to accomplish it, when it will be accomplished and how it will be evaluated. Experiences must be organized so that each one contributes to the total development of children.

Support for effective program implementation usually comes through knowledge and acceptance. The principal, the chief administrator of a school, provides the supervision and support necessary for school personnel to work effectively with children and parents. The administrator must be knowledgeable about program plans, goals, and objectives and share and invite administrative input, initially, and at regular intervals.

Gains in early education can be maintained and extended through cooperative programming and transitional planning as children move from one level to the next.

INVOLVING PARENTS IN THE TEAM

In designing Early Childhood Education programs there are a number of alternative models that effectively involve parents in the education of their child.

Such models include:

1. Using the home as a learning center with the parent or parent surrogate observing and assisting the visiting teacher in the instruction of the child. Home teaching may involve one child or a small group of children and their parents. Children's needs determine whether the home teaching sessions are daily, twice weekly, weekly or bimonthly. Related games and activities are suggested for parent and child to continue the learning between home teaching visits.
2. Providing group experiences in the school facilities on Saturdays or other available times when parents can observe and become part of the teaching team, working with individuals or small groups under teacher guidance. Home teaching, as described above, serves to personalize the program for each child according to his/her needs and abilities. Children with special problems and handicaps participate in the group experiences with their nonhandicapped peers. Individually prescribed learning programs are provided for home and school as needed. A lending library and suggested games and learning activities for home use are provided for all participants on a weekly basis.
3. Using school facilities for a once-a-week group learning experience as parents observe (through a one-way mirror, if available). Teaching techniques, use of materials, and patterns of child development are discussed with parents by other staff members. Following the observation period, parents practice techniques observed and make a learning device that was demonstrated by the teacher to use in the home. The classroom experience is followed up with home teaching.
4. Providing in-school experiences two or more times per week combined with home visits to individualize the program for each child and his parents.
5. Converting school buses or vans into classrooms on wheels to carry teachers and learning materials to children and their parents in rural areas. Activity packets assist parent and child in continuing the learning process throughout the week.
6. Preparing teaching packets for parents to use with their children at home. Workshops are held for parents on effective use of the games and activities provided in the packets, on suggested extending activities, and on evaluation of the child's response to the learning activities.
7. Providing an early education program in a day care setting, involving parents in program planning and evaluation and in observing and assisting at school and on field trips as their work schedules permit.
8. Integrating an early childhood education program into the high school program, involving students in the care and instruction of the children under teacher direction. This can serve a dual purpose of benefiting young children and educating young people for parenthood.

In order for families to respond, they must have at least minimal skills in language, cognition, abstract reasoning, and interpersonal relationships. Such skills are minimal in some families. These families are not to be neglected. Knowledge about family situations are valuable in working with children

and parents. Parents working cooperatively with the school frequently learn how to meet the educational needs of their children as well as some of their own needs. Parents can reinforce the curriculum or classroom program based on their interest and abilities. They are (1) the primary source for their children's attitudes about learning, (2) the initiators of language arts and thinking skills, and (3) the developers of basic skills in the home.

Early Childhood programs that provide workshops for parents find them to be an effective means of improving parenting skills, thus indirectly facilitating the child's learning. These are especially important if the program does not include home teaching visits.

Workshops may include small group discussion, demonstration teaching, preparation of learning materials or instruction on the use of learning packets in the home. Parents have the opportunity to share experiences and ideas, providing mutual encouragement and support. They are given confidence in their skills and abilities to motivate and teach their child in numerous informal ways. Workshops can help parents to better understand and accept developmental variability in children.

Many opportunities should be provided jointly for parents and educators to look closely at the school community and its program. Parents who are dealing with stressful or potentially stressful life situations need a kind of support that frequently teachers cannot provide. In these instances, it is necessary to have basic information about services available within the school community that can be extended to families in a useable way. It is necessary to know the services that are available in the school and community and the agencies that offer the services and their locations, hours, and persons to contact. Understanding, informed parents contribute not only to the child's success in learning, but provide needed support to the school.

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